

Preparing for the New
**Smarter
Balanced**
Statewide Assessment

Information for Families of
Students with Disabilities



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Preparing for the New Statewide Assessment



This school year, all students in Kindergarten through twelfth grade have been learning Mathematics and English Language Arts based on Common Core State Standards (CCSS). English Language Arts (ELA) includes reading, writing, speaking and listening, language, media and technology.

The CCSS provide clear expectations for what all students should learn at each grade level. They stress critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills required for success in higher education and 21st Century careers.

Smarter Balanced Assessment

With a change in standards comes the need for a new assessment system to give students, parents and teachers accurate information about whether students are on track to graduate from high school ready for college and the workplace. Hawaii is one of twenty-six states participating in the development of the **Smarter Balanced Assessment System**—a high quality statewide assessment that provides tools and information for schools to improve instruction and help students succeed, regardless of disability, language or background.

The beauty of the **Smarter Balanced Assessment** is in its design which uses the principles of Universal Design for Learning. The Smarter Balanced technology platform provides a variety of options that fit the needs of individual students, allowing each student to show what he or she has learned in relation to the Common Core Standards in ELA and Mathematics.

These flexible supports are divided into 3 groups:

- **Universal Supports:** tools that are available to all students. They include options on the computer like zoom text, highlighter, breaks, and math tools, as well as extra supports like scratch paper or a Thesaurus.



- **Designated Supports:** additional supports that have been listed as needed by the student by a teacher or team (like color contrast, text-to-speech technology, or a separate test setting).
- **Accommodations:** changes in procedures or materials that increase equal access to the test for students with disabilities. An example is an American Sign Language video for a student who is Deaf.

A student with a disability can be aided in test-taking by all three categories of support, if needed.

Embedded vs. Non-Embedded

In each of the three broad groups of assessment supports, the optional features are either *embedded* or *non-embedded*. *Embedded supports* are built-in to the assessment software. *Non-embedded supports* are provided on the spot and can involve trained adults (like scribes), as well as separate tools (like an abacus or an assistive technology device) and separate seating.

Embedded	Non-Embedded
 <p>Zoom Text • Color contrast • Closed captioning • Braille • other supports as part of the technology</p>	 <p>Supports like dictionaries, seating, extra time, etc.</p>

Documenting Test Supports

In order for the assessment process to run smoothly and adequately support the student, two things must happen:

- ✓ Designated supports and accommodations must be agreed upon **in advance** and documented, so that they can be in place on the day of the test; and
- ✓ The student must have time to practice using these supports before the actual assessment.

For students with disabilities, designated supports and accommodations should be discussed and selected in the IEP meeting or 504 Plan meeting.

Preparing for the New Statewide Assessment (cont.)

Smarter Balanced & the IEP Process

The annual IEP meeting requires a discussion of individualized supports and accommodations that may be needed in statewide assessments. Given that the IEP team is made up of individuals who know the strengths and needs of the student--including parents and the student, as appropriate--here are some **relevant questions to help with decision-making**:

Does the student need accommodations in daily instruction? If so, he or she will likely need them during testing.

What testing accommodations has the student regularly used? Are these accommodations or designated supports available in Smarter Balanced?

What do team members think about how well prior testing supports and accommodations have worked?

When considering new accommodations, is the student willing to use them?

Here are some **additional things to consider**:

Review Accommodations Annually

An accommodation should not be automatically carried over from year to year without a discussion of its fit to the student's current learning needs.

Involve the Student

The more a student is involved in selecting his or her accommodations, the more likely they will be used.

Practice Makes Perfect

Make sure the student has had opportunities to practice using the support or accommodation prior to testing.

Types of Supports & Accommodations

The accommodations and individualized supports required by an IEP or 504 Plan help to overcome or work around the student's disability without lowering his learning expectations.

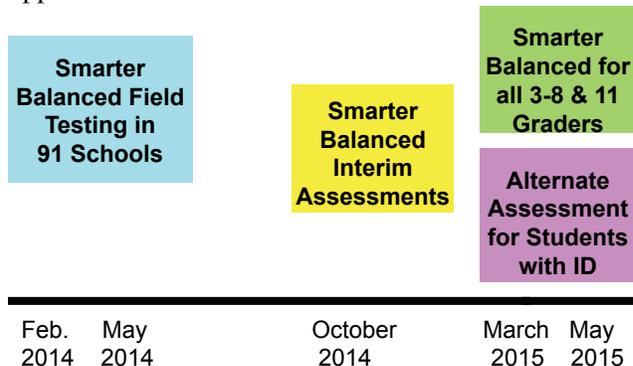
Accommodations have often been described as falling into the following four categories:

- ✓ Presentation
- ✓ Response
- ✓ Setting
- ✓ Timing/Scheduling

On page 3 we list Accommodations and Designated Supports for students with disabilities by category.

Smarter Balanced Timeline

Almost all students in Grades 3-8 and 11 are scheduled to take the Smarter Balanced Assessment sometime during the last 12 weeks of next school year (2014-15). The exception is a small group of students with significant cognitive or intellectual disabilities (ID) who will take an Alternate Assessment. Prior to that year-end assessment, students will have opportunities to take interim assessments.



During this school year, ninety-one schools have signed up to field test Smarter Balanced. The scores won't be reported. It's just an opportunity to try out the test for the first time and get both students and teachers familiar with how it should be given and how the various supports work.

Additional Information

If you would like more information about the Smarter Balanced Assessment and testing accommodations for students with disabilities, feel free to call SPIN, check out the following websites, and discuss with your child's IEP coordinator.



<http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/Testing/StateAssessment/Pages/home.aspx>
Hawaii Department of Education's webpage on statewide assessments



http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SmarterBalanced_Guidelines_091113.pdf
2013 SBA Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines



<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED486451.pdf>
National Center for Learning Disabilities parent brief on testing accommodations

DESIGNATED SUPPORTS & ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PRESENTATION: Different ways for the student to access information		
Who Can Benefit	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Students with print disabilities (difficulty or inability to visually read standard print because of a physical, sensory or cognitive disability)	Color contrast Color overlays Magnification (using an assistive technology device)	
Students who have reading-related disabilities	Read aloud by a trained adult (except for reading passages) Text-to-speech technology	
Students with vision disabilities	Magnification (using an assistive technology device)	Braille
Students with vision disabilities who are not Braille users	Text-to-speech technology Read aloud by a trained adult	Read aloud by a trained adult
Students with attention difficulties or distractability	Turning off universal tools Color contrast Color overlays Masking	
Students who are Deaf or hard of hearing and use American Sign Language		American Sign Language (ASL) Closed captioning
RESPONSE: Different ways for the student to show knowledge		
Who Can Benefit	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Students with vision disabilities		Abacus Braille or talking calculator
Students who have significant motor or processing difficulties	Scribe (a trained adult who writes down what a student dictates) - for non-writing items and math items	Alternate Response Options (like adapted keyboards) Scribe - for writing items Speech-to-text (using the student's voice to give responses for writing items)
Students with a calculation disability (like dyscalcula)		Multiplication table
Students with a recent injury that makes it difficult to type	Scribe (a trained adult who writes down what a student dictates) - for non-writing items and math items	Scribe - for writing items Speech-to-text
SETTING: Changing the location or conditions of the testing setting		
Who Can Benefit	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Students who are easily distracted (or may distract others)	Separate setting	
TIMING: Changing the length or organization of the time for testing		
Who Can Benefit	Designated Supports	Accommodations
Students who require designated supports or accommodations that add to the time needed to complete the test	NOTE: There is no need for a specific designated support or accommodation under timing, as the Smarter Balanced Assessment is not timed.	